Frequently Asked Questions for the NCSC Pilot 2 Test
Updated July 29, 2014

About NCSC

1. **What is the National Center and State Collaborative?**

   The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is a project funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, and is led by five organizations and 24 states to construct an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS), aligned to the Common Core State Standards, for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and 11. The goal of the NCSC project is to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. More information is available at: http://www.ncscpartners.org/

About the Pilot 2 Test

2. **What is the NCSC Pilot 2 Test?**

   During the NCSC Pilot 2 Test students and test administrators will have the opportunity to try out items and interact with a computer based test administration platform in reading, mathematics, and writing. The Pilot 2 Test will supplement the work from the Pilot 1 Test, providing additional information on the functionality of items, test forms, platform performance, and the overall user experience. Pilot 2 will be administered to students in grades 4–9 and 12.

3. **Why is Pilot 2 Test going to be administered to students in grades 4–9 and 12 instead of grades 3–8 and 11?**

   Since the Pilot 2 Test will be administered in fall 2014, students will not yet have received instruction in the entire curriculum for the grade level in which they are enrolled. Therefore, students will be tested on content in which they received instruction during the previous school year, e.g., students currently enrolled in grade 4 will take grade 3 test(s), students currently enrolled in grade 9 will take grade 8 test(s), etc. For The Operational Test in spring 2015, students in grades 3–8 and 11 will be tested on content for the grade in which they are enrolled.

4. **When will the Pilot 2 Test be administered?**
The window for the NCSC Pilot 2 Test is October 20 — November 14, 2014.

5. **Will Pilot 2 be the only NCSC assessment for school year 2014-15?**
No. There will also be an Operational Test in spring 2015.

6. **What is the NCSC Pilot 2 Test design?**
Eligible students for alternate assessment in grades 4–9 and 12 will take Pilot 2 Test forms in either ELA (reading and writing) or mathematics and reading. In both test forms there will be a range of item complexity.

- *ELA:* The ELA Pilot 2 Test will consist of two sessions. Session One will contain three reading passages and selected-response items that assess reading literary and informational text aligned to the Core Content Connectors (CCCs). Four selected-response items will assess writing skills aligned to the CCCs. Additional reading foundational items are included in Grades 3 and 4. Session Two contains two constructed-response writing prompts.
- *Reading:* The Reading Pilot 2 Test will consist of two sessions. Session One will contain three reading passages and selected-response items that assess reading literary and informational text aligned to the Core Content Connectors (CCCs). Additional reading foundational items are included in Grades 3 and 4. Session Two will contain two informational text aligned to the Core Content Connectors (CCCs). Additional reading foundational items are included in Grades 3 and 4.
- *Mathematics:* The Mathematics Pilot 2 Test will consist of two sessions. Sessions One and Two will contain selected response and constructed response items that assess mathematics content standards aligned to the CCCs. Each session has 20 items.

7. **For the Pilot 2 Test, will students be required to participate in both ELA (reading and writing) *and* in reading and mathematics?**
No. Students will be randomly assigned the Pilot 2 Test in either ELA (reading and writing) or reading and mathematics.

8. **Will districts or schools receive student, school, or district Pilot 2 Test results?**

No. Districts and schools will not receive student, school, or district test results. The focus for the Pilot 2 Test is only on the test items and procedures so that these can be refined, if needed, for the Operational Test which will be administered in spring 2015. However, after the spring 2015 Operational Test students, schools, and districts will receive test results.

Student Participation Eligibility and School Participation

9. **Which students are eligible to participate in the NCSC Pilot 2 Test?**

All students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades 4–9 and 12, who meet the criteria for eligibility for participation in the NCSC AA-AAS, provided in "Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the NCSC Alternate Assessment," are eligible to participate in the NCSC Pilot 2 Test.

NCSC Participation
Guidance Nov2013.c

10. **Is there a requirement for parent/guardian consent for student participation in the Pilot 2 Test?**

NCSC does not require parent/guardian consent for participation in Pilot 2 Test since the information collected will not be analyzed or reported at an individual student level and is used only for the purposes of test development. However, if there are local or state policies that do require parent/guardian consent, then the district or state will provide appropriate instruction to schools to comply with district or state specific policies.

11. **May a center-based or separate school participate in the Pilot 2 Test?**

Yes, any school that has students who meet the participation guidelines may participate in the Pilot 2 Test. See Frequently Asked Question 9 for additional information.

12. **If a school has only one student eligible to participate, should that school participate in the Pilot 2 Test?**

Yes. All schools that have eligible students are encouraged to participate in the Pilot 2 Test.

Enrolling Students for the Pilot 2 Test

13. How are students enrolled to participate in Pilot 2 Test?

A template and instructions will be provided to each participating state and states will have access to training for the enrollment process in August 2014. Data from each state will need to be formatted using the template and uploaded securely to the Test Administrator Portal (TAP). All fields must be submitted prior to September 26. NCSC will expect that the enrollment data submitted represent sites that are willing and able to participate in Pilot 2 Test.

Administering the Pilot 2 Test

14. How will the Pilot 2 Tests be administered?

The Pilot 2 Test will be presented to students via the online NCSC assessment system. Test administrators will administer the Pilot 2 Test individually to each student. Test administrators will follow the scripted text provided in the Directions for Test Administration for the tests they will administer. Test administrators will also follow the guidelines to provide accommodations that are needed for individual students. The accommodation guidelines are located in the Pilot 2 Test Administration Manual.

15. What materials will test administrators need to prepare prior to the test administration?

Test Administrators must review the Directions for Test Administration (DTA) that accompanies the student's assigned test form and follow the scripted directions exactly. Support materials that may need to be copied for the student's use are clearly identified and included in the DTA. Any manipulatives needed to administer the test are clearly listed in the DTA and are easily found in a typical classroom.

16. How much time will it take to administer a pilot test?

The time needed to administer the Pilot 2 Test will vary by student. In both test forms there will be a range of item complexity. Test administrators will be able to pause and resume the pilot test based on student needs. Please refer to frequently asked question 6 for the number and type of items on the tests.

17. Who will record the response to test items for students who are not able to do so?

If the student does not use a mouse to record responses to the online test directly in the NCSC assessment system, the test administrator may enter the student responses for students who indicate responses to test items by verbalizing, pointing, eye gaze, use of assistive technologies, etc. Please see the Test Administration Manual for specific directions for recording student responses.

18. What should a test administrator do if the student has difficulty working for sustained periods of time or becomes frustrated during the test session?

The test administrator is permitted to pause and resume the test based on the needs of the student. If the test is paused, there is no loss of any recorded student responses. The test administrator may provide the student a brief break or may resume the administration of the test on a different day. Please see the Test Administration Manual for specific directions on pausing and resuming the test as well as the conditions which indicate that a test should be terminated.

19. Since the tests are administered online, what are the technology requirements?

Requirements for technology are found in the following table.

Test Delivery Workstation Hardware and Software: The test delivery system should align with the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) recommendations. The following represents the minimum hardware and software requirements of the test delivery workstation.	
Operating System	Windows Vista SP2, Windows 7, Windows 8. OS X 10.4.4 (Tiger), 10.5 (Leopard), 10.6 (Snow Leopard), 10.7 (Lion), 10.8 (Mountain Lion), 10.9. Linux is not supported.
Browser	IE 9 or better; Firefox 24 or later; Chrome 26 or better; Opera 12 or better Safari 6 or better.
Monitor	Screen resolution: 1024 x 768 or higher; screen size 9.5: inches or larger, color depth: high color, 16 bit millions.

Other Workstation Requirements	32 bit and 64 bit processors supported; disk space: 100 MB or more; Chromebook version 18 or better. Any media will be played through native browser capabilities.
Evidence Collection	Document scanner or Webcam (640 x 480 or better).
Bandwidth	1.5 Mbps dedicated or faster.
Flash	Not required.

Training for Test Administrators

20. What are the training requirements for <u>test administrators</u> who will administer a NCSC pilot test?

Pilot 2 Test administrators must complete a series of online training modules that will be available starting September 29, 2014. The training modules include important information from three manuals that all test administrators will use:

  (1) Test Administration Manual
  (2) Directions for Test Administration
  (3) TAP User Manual

States may also elect to offer face-to-face training to test administrators. After completing each training module, test administrators will take a quiz. After completing all training modules, test administrators will take a final quiz and must achieve a score of 80% before administering the Pilot 2 Test. This helps ensure that the Pilot 2 Test items are administered in a standardized manner, and that therefore, the inferences made from the students' responses will be valid.

What are the training requirements for <u>test coordinators</u> who will supervise the administration of the NCSC pilot test?

Test coordinators must complete the online training modules that focus on information in the Test Administration Manual and the TAP User Manual.

This helps ensure that the test coordinators are knowledgeable about their responsibilities, testing integrity, appropriate test practices for the NCSC Pilot 2 Test, and the procedures for registering students and test administrators.

For Additional Information

21. Who should districts/schools/test administrators contact with questions about the Pilot 2 Test?

Questions about the Pilot 2 Test may be directed to the CTB-NCSC helpdesk, which provides telephone support (888-630-9145) from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST Monday through Friday. E-mail support is available at NCSC_helpdesk@ctb.com.